

USA Comments – Terrestrial Animal Health Commission  
March 2007 Report

CHAPTER 2.2.XX.

WEST NILE FEVER

Article 2.2.XX.1.

...

Although most avian species are susceptible to infection, the outcome of the infection is highly variable according to the species. Chickens and turkeys are usually resistant to disease and do not develop viremia sufficient to infect mosquitoes, ~~with the exception of chicks less than 12 days old.~~

**Rationale:** The inclusion of “chicks less than 12 days old” as a susceptible species is based on experimental challenge studies, and not on published reports of natural exposure resulting in viremia. The United States moves, both internationally and domestically, millions of day-old chicks (those less than 72 hours old) each year and not a single incident of WNF has been associated with such movement, even though WNV is now considered endemic. OIE recommendations are based on risk, and the risk of transmitting WNV via day old chicks is infinitesimal. The United States requests that chicks less than 12 days old be removed from the list of susceptible species.

WNV is maintained in a mosquito–bird–mosquito transmission cycle, whereas humans and equidae are considered dead-end hosts. Most human infections occur by natural transmission from mosquitoes.

Many animal species are known to be susceptible to WNV infection and outbreaks of a fatal neurological disease have been reported in humans, equidae, geese and wild birds.

In relation to domestic animal trade, geese and ducks might represent a risk for the spread of the WNV ~~the WNF~~ as some species have been documented to develop a viremia sufficient to infect mosquitoes.

**Comment:** Correction in syntax and acronym.

USA Comments – Terrestrial Animal Health Commission  
March 2007 Report

Article 2.2.XX.7.

When importing from WNF infected countries or zones, *Veterinary Administrations* should require:

for susceptible species

the presentation of an *international veterinary certificate* attesting that the animals:

1. were protected from attack from WNV mosquito vectors for at least 30 days prior to shipment; or
2. were subjected to a serological test according to the *Terrestrial Manual* to detect WNV neutralizing antibodies with positive results; or
3. were protected from attack from WNV mosquito vectors for at least 15 days prior to shipment, and were subjected during that period to an agent identification test according to the *Terrestrial Manual*, with negative results, carried out on a sample collected at least 3 days after being introduced in the mosquito free zone; or
4. were vaccinated in accordance with the *Terrestrial Manual* at least 30 days before shipment, against WNV, and were identified in the accompanying certification as having been vaccinated; or
5. are not vaccinated and a surveillance programme in accordance with Appendix 3.8.X. has been in place in the source population for a period of 30 days immediately prior to shipment, and no evidence of WNV transmission has been detected;

USA Comments – Terrestrial Animal Health Commission  
March 2007 Report

**Rationale:** For Items 1 through 5 respectively, if we are addressing day-old chicks, then:

- 1) day-old chicks are not alive for 30 days prior to shipment;
- 2) time constraints make any testing of day-old chicks impractical and costly;
- 3) chicks are not alive for 15 days prior to shipment; again, testing is impractical and costly;
- 4) there is no approved vaccine for use in chicks; chicks are not alive for 30 days prior to shipment;
- 5) there is little sense of conducting an active surveillance program in endemic areas.

As mentioned in the first Rationale made, chicks need to be excluded and not lumped with the grouping of susceptible species.

AND

6. i. were protected from attack from WNV mosquito vectors during transportation to the *place of shipment*; or
7. 6. were vaccinated 30 days before shipment or had antibodies against WNV.

**Comment:** Item 6 under Article 2.2.X.X.7 should be a sub-item under Item 5 and not a separate item.